Conservation Practices and the Iowa Storm Events of 2008

2008 Flood Damage Assessment Survey—Results

Estimated acres suffering severe damage

20 tons per acre soil erosion:	2,284,000 ac.
Bottomland scouring:	636,000 ac.

Percent of practices that operated properly

Grass Waterways	55%
Terraces	83%
Grade Stabilization Structures/ Water and Sediment Control Basins	90%

Number of conservation practice sites needing repair

Grassed Waterways	12,157
Terraces	8,137
Water and Sediment Control Basins	3,375
Grade Stabilization Structures	800

Key Observations of Field-Level Conservationists

- Crop residues reduced soil erosion and slowed runoff
- Long term no till showed fewer signs of erosion and runoff than any system using tillage
- Fields with combinations of two or more conservation practices performed better than fields with a single practice
- Practices installed and maintained to NRCS standards and specifications generally functioned and operated as designed and withstood the storms
- Maintenance of conservation practices, particularly waterways, was important to their success.

Lessons Learned – Direction for the Future

1. Consider "hydrologic footprint" of all actions
2. Propose new initiatives for water storage & infiltration
3. Accelerate adoption of no-till/residue management for erosion, soil quality, & infiltration
4. Expand "conservation systems approach"
5. Increase focus on practice maintenance
6. Renewed focus on planning at the farm/watershed level

Build a *"Culture of Conservation"*!